

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 597

By Southerland

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the Tennessee Work Ethic Diploma program.

WHEREAS, the Work Ethic Diploma program originated as part of the Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP), a Tennessee initiative developed to ensure that the State is graduating skilled workers ready to take on the jobs offered by employers and industry; and

WHEREAS, LEAP seeks to create community-led partnerships that align educational training and postsecondary credentials to meet the needs of regional industry employers; these partnerships include industry partners, postsecondary institutions, K-12 educators, and workforce development professionals; and

WHEREAS, a work ethic diploma is a workforce readiness credential that can be earned by high school seniors in participating counties; students who earn the Tennessee Work Ethic Diploma are given preference for job interviews at partnering employers if they meet all other qualifications of the job posting; and

WHEREAS, participating students receive a list of Work Ethic Diploma Standards that includes fourteen achievement categories, with each category having one, two, or three subcategories that are assigned a point value; and

WHEREAS, the fourteen achievement categories include attendance, discipline, overall grade point average, drug-free standard, CTE Coursework, Dual Enrollment/Credit Standard, Industry Certification Standard, Career Readiness, and Industry Awareness; and

WHEREAS, in order to receive the credential, students who sign up for the Work Ethic Diploma must complete a sufficient number of goals set out in the achievement categories to score twenty points; and

WHEREAS, Chris Edmonds, the LEAP Grant Project Manager at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Morristown, is the individual who developed and drove the Tennessee Work Ethic Diploma to fruition; and

WHEREAS, the Work Ethic Diploma program was first adopted and implemented in school systems in Grainger, Hamblen, and Hawkins counties, with high schools there awarding the first Work Ethic Diplomas at the end of the 2015-2016 school year; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the program expanded to include school districts in Cocke, Greene, and Sevier counties, so that at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, seventeen different school systems in Northeast Tennessee will award Work Ethic Diploma credentials to their graduating students; and

WHEREAS, the program enjoys success with local industry, and forty employers currently recognize the Work Ethic Diploma, with new industry partners added regularly; the Work Ethic Diploma will help build a brighter economic future for all of Northeast Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, such resounding success should and must be replicated statewide to offer our students the best chance for a bright future, ensure a quality workforce for area employers, and continue the economic progress of the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend the Tennessee Work Ethic Diploma program on its exceptional success in Northeast Tennessee and strongly encourage its expansion into every school system in the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.